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JULY 2002The Gifts of Thanks and Praise
and Service to the Lord Jesus

Ephesians 3:1-20



This message is a translation and restatement by the Rt. Rev. David Lai of his Report to All Delegates delivered during the Diocese of Taiwan's 42nd Convention, May 24~25, 2002.



In Ephesians 3, Paul shares his belief in the importance of giving thanks, praise and service to the Lord. He begins, in verse two, by saying, "for surely you have already heard of the commission of God's grace that was given me for you." Paul journeyed three times as an Evangelist, and wrote his letter to the Ephesians while jailed in Rome. In 2nd Corinthians 11:23-29 he describes the extreme difficulties he encountered on these missionary journeys. Very few people know that, following his call by Jesus, Paul served God as an Evangelist for 33 years. After suffering for the Lord for that many years, you would think him the most qualified person to ask blessings and mercy from Lord, but he didn't. Nor did he complain or proclaim how great were his achievements for the Lord. Through all of his difficult times, Paul remained concerned for the people he had touched. He continued to be humble, obedient and strong in his determination to go on answering the call of the Lord (verses 7 and 8). Paul was a true servant – he gladly accepted the role of Servant of the Lord.

I, too, am willing to be such a servant. God is my Master and I am his joyful servant in my daily life. To do this I must be honest, faithful, humble, and considerate of others as I do my job. I didn't mind being that kind of Servant to the Lord.

Therefore, I expect everybody to support and encourage me and provide me with the supervision that will let me be a good, loyal Servant of the Lord. I also encourage them to work together – if they do not unite, they are not qualified to be Children of the Lord.

Paul also knew the importance of giving thanks and praise to the Lord. Through the Holy Spirit, Paul knew the secret of the Gospel: that, in Christ, Gentiles have become co-heirs, members in the same body and sharers in the promise of Christ Jesus through the Gospel (verse 6). In our society, children expect all from their parents, but do not expect to give in return. As Children of God, however, we should follow the teaching of our Heavenly Father stated in Proverbs 23:25-26. Sons of the Lord need to worship Him with the honesty. Failing to be honest, we dare not seek the Father. In the Eucharist the Purification Prayer assists us in achieving this honesty. When we are honest in spiritual matters, we will be led to be honest with humankind – not just the honesty of truth, but also truth with spiritual wisdom. Then we will be able to say things to help, not criticize or destroy others and we will be entitled to expect the same in return. As the Chinese family glorifies its ancestors, so the Children of God should live to love and honor God and their fellow

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Gifts of Thanks, Praise and Service

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man. If we do so, we will realize God is with us and will fulfill His promises of Isaiah 40:8 and 55:11.

By the grace and the might of the Lord, Paul became a deacon of the Gospel (verse 7-11). He understood the secret and the wisdom of Almighty God. When Paul met the resurrected Lord on the road to Damascus and accepted his call, he committed himself to spend the remainder of his life proclaiming the Gospel. If Paul hadn't loved the Lord, he wouldn't have spent almost eight years on dangerous missionary journeys. He would not have faced the perils he encountered. He could have stayed in Jerusalem to enjoy life.

So, I offer my encouragement. We have callings and gifts from the Lord, just like Paul. We should do our duty. We should use every opportunity to share our witness: to proclaim the teaching of Lord Jesus.

Pastor Gerald Coates presents an image of how we are to accomplish this. He says that there are different roads for all the Children of God: evangelist, pastor, teacher, prophet, and disciple. He uses the hand as an illustration. First he speaks of the thumb, the representation of the disciple. The thumb is stable; it provides leadership and, balance. Only the thumb regularly touches all the other fingers. Second is the index finger, which represents the prophet. Its is the role of vision. It teaches how to serve. Then comes the middle finger, the evangelist. It is the longest. It can reach the farthest side of the world. It is followed by the ring finger, the pastor, which develops interrelationships and builds a fellowship of love. Finally, there is the little finger, which represents the teacher. The little finger is the only one able to be put into the ear in order to dig out the wax blocking the voice of God from reaching us. Only when the ear wax has been removed are we able to

apprehend the secrets of God and understand how to obey Him. Pastor Coates reminds us that on the hand there is no one leader. All of the parts must work together. In terms of the image, they must cooperate to achieve the fulfillment of the Great Commission. As a further example, all parts of the body work together to protect the whole. If one day the hands choose to say, "It is not my business", then the next time a mosquito lands on the arm, the eyes will not see it and the arm will end up covered in mosquito bites.

Because Paul believed in Jesus Christ, he had no fear and was without doubt. It will be the same for anyone who finds out what gift he has received from God. That person will become a responsible Christian, a responsible Child of God. Those who use the gift they receive from God offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. They become obedient, humble, gentle, good and mature Christians. They are filled with the Holy Spirit and are relieved of their hearts of stone. They are also given the additional gift of spiritual eyes so they will know how to appreciate the gifts of others and work in harmony with them to serve God.

Before our life with Christ began it was our goal to satisfy our own needs and find personal enjoyment. We did not heed the call from God and the Holy Spirit. We were not able to stand out by making a commitment to the Spirit. We dared not learn how to witness for the Lord. But, still, God continued to offer us new chances to confess and turn our lives to His service.

At our Diocesan Convention, the number of delegates is around 70. In Luke 9:57-10:6 Jesus sends out 70 disciples to proclaim His Gospel. Jesus says, "Come follow me", while we continue to use different excuses to reject or refuse His invitation. Fortunately, Jesus does not hold a grudge. He forgives and invites us again

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August Ordinations Bring Assignment Changes

New ordinations will bring changes in clergy assignments to the Diocese as of August 1, 2002. On the 24th of August at 3:00 p.m. at St. Timothy's Church in Kaohsiung, The Rev. June Y.K. Chou and The Rev. Leo Wen-Ben Tzeng, Deacons, will be ordained priests of the Episcopal Church. Also at that service, Joseph Wu and Daniel Lee, currently serving as Evangelists at The Church of the Good Shepherd, Taipei, and Grace Church, Tainan, respectively, will be ordained Deacon.

Following his ordination to the priesthood, Leo Wen-Ben Tzeng will be transferred



from his position as Assistant at St. Peter's Church, Chia-yi, to become Assistant at St. James Church, Taichung. The Rev. June Y.K. Chou will continue to serve at St. Mark's Church, Pingtung, where she will become Vicar.

Daniel Lee will become Deacon-in-Charge at Grace Church, Tainan, following the end of July retirement of its Vicar, The Rev. Chun-Shih Ou. The Rev. Joseph Wu will remain at The Church of the Good Shepherd in the position of Deacon. In addition, Evangelist Richard Lee will become the Assistant at St. Timothy's Church, Kaohsiung.

Gifts of Thanks, Praise and Service

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and again. It says in the Bible that the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers few. It also says those who accept the call will be sent as lambs to the wolf. Jesus keeps giving another chance so that everyone of us can be His co-worker. That is a blessing.

In Luke 22, we read that Jesus sent the disciples into the world not carrying purse, bag, or shoes. Later He tells the disciples that these are not His instructions for everyone, in every circumstance. He makes it clear that only when we have the gift from Almighty God, can we concentrate with all our heart and complete His expectations of fulfilling His Great Commission. We must prepare ourselves to become involved not in a fight against enemies of flesh and blood, but,

rather, in fighting with the rulers of the world of darkness. We must depend on His grace and might (Ephesians 6:10-17) to become strong in the fight against evil and withstand the temptations of comfort and ease Satan puts before us.

Bishop David Lai was asked recently why he has chosen the picture of the entire congregation that witnessed his consecration to hang so prominently behind his desk at Friendship House. He explained that this photograph symbolizes his belief that it is the role of all those in his diocese and in the Church to support, watch and encourage him as he fulfills his duties as bishop.

Let us, as clergy and as brothers and sisters, embrace the same vision. Let us pray to the Holy Spirit to grant us mercy, to help us.

Let everyone equip himself with the whole armor of God and proclaim the Gospel with courage. Let us renew our lives to witness with grace, praise, and thanks our commitment to serve the Lord. And let us, finally, achieve the Great Commission with all our hearts and minds.

Then, in future, we can proclaim Yahweh is King on earth.

News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

Bishop John Chien returned to Taiwan on May 22 after three months of Visiting Scholar status at The Episcopal Divinity School in Boston Massachusetts. He reports that he found the experience spiritually enriching and energizing. He has told Bishop Lai that he is now looking forward to serving the Diocese of Taiwan in whatever capacity is needed from his home base in Chia-yi.



Rosie Walker, a layworker from The Church Mission Society, London, who has been assigned to St. James, Taichung while Catherine Lee is taking her six month home leave to the UK, is going to Keelung for a month to teach English. During that time she will go to Hualien to participate in the Summer Youth Camp.

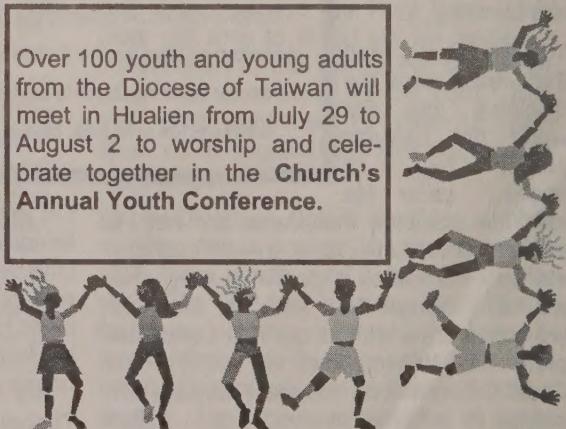


Father Roger Rose, chaplain to the English congregation at St. James, Taichung, is leaving Taiwan in July, and returning to the United States after serving at St. James since last August.

Ron and Toni Noah, missioners of the Episcopal Church U.S.A., are leaving Taiwan after two years to return to their home in Iowa. During their time with the Diocese of Taiwan, Ron and Toni have worked with the Church of the Advent, Tamshui, and have taught English at St. John's and St. Mary's Institute of Technology.

The Church of the Good Shepherd, Taipei, will soon announce its choice for the person who will fill the position of English Chaplain when the Rev. Graham Witcher returns to Canada this fall. The Church's Vestry will meet in mid-July to select from nine well-qualified candidates for the position. Meanwhile, The Rev. Peter T.P. Chen is serving as temporary Priest-in-Charge of Good Shepherd as the Congregation continues to look for a successor to the recently retired Elizabeth Wei.

Over 100 youth and young adults from the Diocese of Taiwan will meet in Hualien from July 29 to August 2 to worship and celebrate together in the Church's Annual Youth Conference.



News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs News Briefs

President of SJSMIT to Retire



Andrew C. Chang PhD will retire at the end of July as President of St. John's and St. Mary's Institute of Technology, the Episcopal Church affiliated college in Tamshui. He has served as SJSMIT's President for the past 13 years. Dr. Chang leaves a legacy of tremendous growth and development at the school, a reputation as a just and visionary administrative educator, and countless international friendships as the hallmarks of his term in office. He will spend the next year pursuing advanced study in the fields of Christian Ethics and Education.

A group of 30 or so from the Diocese of Taiwan, led by The Rt. Rev. David Lai, will tour Italy from July 8 to July 21. A highlight of the trip will be their attendance at Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on July 14. Representatives of the group have been invited by the Vatican staff to read the Epistle and a portion of the Intercessions during the service.



The Museum of World Religions

by Graham Witcher

"This is the sort of place that people who like to visit this sort of place will like to visit" (my emendation of an all-time favorite book review).

As a visitor to the Museum of World Religions you enter the seventh floor via a corridor lined with photographs of people at worship along the left wall, and tempting touch screens on the right. You are welcomed under a domed "night sky" and bidden to reflect on the vastness of space, and the smallness of the self.

Following a video presentation on Origins - citing various cosmologies from ancient cultures - you descend to the sixth floor hall devoted to the journey of life: beginnings, adolescence, marriage, old age, death and the afterlife. At each 'station' there is a wooden bench (birch, ash, cedar, maple, beech, elm) symbolizing the particular stage of life. Each life milestone has a curved screen, a circular display cabinet with relevant objets d'art, and audio tracks playing wisdom from various religious sources. Offsetting these areas are a meditation room - with written and aural examples of meditation as practiced by various believers, and an awakening room - with videos of local people describing their own spiritual awakening.

From there a short flight of stairs takes you back to the seventh floor and into the Great Hall of World Religions. Standing before any particular exhibit (Taiwanese Folk Religion, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism, etc.) you are on a floor motif-tied to the particular religion, and can examine at leisure various items associated with the practice of that religion. Items are numbered and identified, and something of the teaching and practice of each religion is printed in Chinese and English. The presence of each religion in Taiwan is also spelled out.

Somewhere between background and foreground, the music of worship from around the world haunts you and takes you out of the self-centeredness of ordinary life into a space and time for inner-communion and outer-connectedness.

All in all, this museum deserves to be as widely known and visited as any other museum in Taipei. The guides are discreetly helpful, and clearly non-partisan in their commentary. A group of twenty or more visitors can pre-arrange an English-speaking guide. The four members of the Wednesday morning study group from Church of the Good Shepherd with whom my wife and I toured the museum unreservedly recommend a visit.

and the Moral of the Story Is...

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on one end of a pole he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it. The other was perfect.

For two years, at the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, while the cracked pot was miserable and ashamed of its imperfection. Feeling a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day. "I want to apologize to you. I have been able to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back

to your house. Because of my flaw you don't get full value for your efforts."

The bearer responded, "Did you ever notice that there were flowers on only one side of this path? I have always known about your flaw and I planted flower seeds on your side. Every day as we walk back, you water them. For two years I have been able to pick flowers for my house. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be such beauty to grace my home."

Remember:

Each of us has our own unique flaws. It is the flaws we have that makes our lives together so very interesting and rewarding.

The Two Ways

As we were coming up to Lent this year, I gradually realized that the Lord wished to start me on a program of exercises designed to train me in the discipline of screening out distracting sights and sounds.

This is something that has always been particularly difficult for me. Part of my background is in music, and my musical training has taught me to be sensitive to all the sounds around me. Partly because of this background, it is very difficult for me to pay attention to only one sound or one source of sound and ignore all others; as a result, cocktail-party conversation has always been a grievous ordeal for me.

Beyond the pure psychological, cognitive challenge of this discipline, I foresaw an ethical, spiritual difficulty. The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, and the whole Christian theological tradition derived from it, proclaims that everything that exists belongs to one of two categories: 1. God and 2. everything else. Everything that is not God is created by God (for 'without Him was not anything made that was made'), and is therefore at least to some degree an Image of God, as every work of any great artist reflects the quality of that artist. In this life we are confronted on the one hand with God, Whom our souls can perceive through Faith but Who is not, as a general rule, directly apprehensible to our senses, and on the other hand with everything else, which in some fashion, to some degree, reflects the Quality of its Creator.

In reading Charles Williams, I've learned that some Christians are called to ignore or avoid worldly, sensual, created beauty in order to concentrate all their attention on the One Uncreated Delight which is God. Such ascetics learn to say 'not this, not that' to everything that is not God. This approach is traditionally known as the Negative Way or the Way of Rejection — not the rejection of God, but the rejection of every temptation to pay attention to any creation that may be an Image of God but may also get in the way of one's proper allegiance to God alone. The Negative Way is balanced by the Positive Way, the Way of Affirmation, the approach that seeks to recognize and honor God manifest in everything created.

In my head, I believe that the Negative Way is a legitimate Christian approach. But I have never felt called to follow it. Throughout my life, especially during the nearly 30 years that I have been a committed Christian believer, I have embraced

by Steven Schaufele

the Positive Way, the Way of Affirmation. I don't want to 'cut myself off from the World', like a hermit; I have never found that approach appealing or attractive or desirable. I love beautiful women, beautiful music, flowers and mountains and the starry night sky, delicious food and drink, the feel of silk cloth and of warm flannel sheets on a cold night — why should I want to give them up? The Bible says that God approves of pleasure — Psalm 16:11 says "in Your Presence is Fullness of Joy; at Your Right Hand are Pleasures forevermore" — why should I have to give them up? I understand that worldly, sensual pleasures can sometimes get in the way of one's duty to God, and I have struggled for years to moderate and discipline my sensual appetites so that they don't get in the way of my Primary Delight, but rather enhance it. Nevertheless, I have never felt called to actually abandon such lesser delights, and I confess I would resist such a calling at least a little bit if I ever did think it was coming my way.

What I understood the Lord saying to me, at the onset of Lent, was that I am not called upon to give them up, to cut myself off from such things *in general*, but only occasionally, briefly, when it's desirable that I should be focusing my attention on some particular issue to the exclusion of everything else. And I said that this seems reasonable to me. I can accept that without protest. But it's something that's so hard for me to do — given my natural inclinations and habits — that I didn't even really know how to begin. He needed to tell me, clearly and in a way I could understand; He needed to guide me through the process.

I am grateful to be able to say, in all honesty, that, by the time Easter rolled around, I had made significant progress. I was able — for very brief periods of time — to shut down most sensory input and to focus my attention on one particular stimulus — one particular sound, or the sight of one particular small object. I was even able to engage in a cocktail party conversation and actually screen out every voice but that of the person I was actually conversing with — something I'd never been able to do before. I understand that I must from time to time continue these exercises in order to keep my spiritual muscles in shape, so to speak. And — thanks be to God! — I am still free, in general, to enjoy ice cream, beautiful music and beautiful women.



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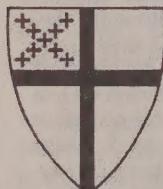
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**The Episcopal
Diocese of Taiwan**

The Rt. Rev. David Lai,
Bishop

New Westminster Youth to Visit

A pilgrimage delegation from the Diocese of Taiwan's Companion Diocese of New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, began a 20-day visit to Taiwan on July 3, 2002.

The group consists of Leaders Jocelyn Parr and Patricia Appavoo as well as Youth Delegates Jordan Cramen, Ingrid Sly, Janet McMordie, and Steve Giroux.

During their time in Taiwan, the group will work as Tutors for the English Language Summer Camp at St. John's and St. Mary's Institute of Technology for eight days. Following that they will visit St. James Church, Taichung, as

well as Tainan and Kaohsiung, where they will participate in church and community activities. After returning to Taipei for two days, the group will fly back to Vancouver on July 23.



The Rt. Rev. David Lai, Bishop of Taiwan, expressed his pleasure that this Companion Diocese relationship is in the process of developing substance through its emerging exchange programs. He emphasized that he sees this visit as part of the effort being made by both parties to build a lasting connection between the two dioceses that is based on action rather than a mere paper contract.